

Mike & Cathy Ward

24 February 2015

The Honorable Madeline Hughes Haikala
United States District Court
Hugo L. Black U.S. Courthouse
1729 Fifth Avenue North
Birmingham, AL 35203

Dear Judge Haikala:

We write today concerning the proposed school rezoning plan submitted to you on behalf of the Huntsville City School Board and Department of Justice. Our daughter Molly is currently a freshman at Grissom High School and one of just the handful of freshman students who would be rezoned from Grissom High School to Huntsville High School as a part of the rezoning plan. Molly's twin brother, Evan, is currently attending New Century Technology High School and would not be affected by the rezoning.

We appreciate the difficult choices you face as you seek a reasonable solution to create the fairest possible outcome for all of the parents and students in the Huntsville City School System.

As a student in the Huntsville City School System in the 1970s, Molly's Dad attended both Huntsville and Grissom High Schools, and is at least a little familiar with some of the issues that these students, parents and you are facing in the current situation.

We have no concerns regarding the rezoning effort and the change that it will have on how our home will be zoned. However, we are concerned that students currently attending high school will not be allow to finish their high school career at the high school where they started their freshman year.

The proposed Consent Order gives no consideration for how students have invested themselves into their school. Freshmen members of the GHS band will face a significant additional financial burden should they decide to attempt to join the HHS band. Cheerleaders and other student athletes will find it difficult, if not impossible as they attempt to try-out for various squads and teams, based on try-out schedules and timelines. Members of clubs and other teams will be at a definite disadvantage as they try to move the school outlets for their passion into unfamiliar and very different systems.

Forcing the few current freshmen students attending GHS and HHS who would be affected by the rezoning to change schools at this time would seem to be very arbitrary and unnecessary. The new district lines will make considerably more sense once the new GHS is built. In the meantime, students who live within walking distance from the existing Grissom High School will be forced to travel over four miles to a different school. Giving students who are currently freshmen in high school the option to choose which school they would prefer to attend would seem to be the fairest possible solution. Allowing for this grandfather provision would have no impact on enrollment at either school.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

  Cathy Ward

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